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ABSTRACT

Six desegregated first grade classrooms in predominantly white working-class communities near a large Midwestern city were observed in order to explore ways in which black males' school experiences differ from those of other students. Twenty percent of the 139 students in the classrooms were black males. Of the six teachers, all of whom were female, three were white and three were black, with the black teachers in charge of the classes with heavier black enrollment. The observations concentrated on: (1) teacher's perceptions of these students; (2) interactions between teachers and black males; and (3) black males' experiences in peer networks. Major findings include the following: the teachers observations were that the black males had poor academic skills on the whole, were a potential behavior problem, and exhibited estrangement and posed a vague threat. Black male student and teacher interactions were more limited than for other students, black males resisting out of class chats with teachers nearly two to four times as often as other students. Black males were also less attentive to the teachers, which led to teachers' feeling that the students were unready for the work. Black males' peer interactions were, in comparison to other students, more central to their schooling experience. They were more insular; gaining status among peers was more important; and group unity was greater and caused tension with the teachers. (CG)

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Uneasy Alliances: Black Males, Teachers, and Peers in Desegregated Classrooms

by

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ABSTRACT

By most measures black male students have a more perilous journey through public schooling than other race-gender students. This paper uses ethnographic observations of six desegregated classrooms to explore ways in which black males' experiences differ from those of other race-gender students. Analyses concentrate on teachers' perceptions of these students, interactions between teachers and black males, and these children's experiences in peer networks. Black males enter classrooms more alienated than other race-gender students. Dynamics in the classroom magnify, rather than diminish, this alienation as black males' schooling progresses.

By most measures the journey through public schools is more perilous for black males than for other race-gender students. Black males have the lowest mean levels of academic achievement (Crain, Mahard, and Narot, 1982). They are more likely than black females or white children to leave school before attaining a high school diploma (Alexander and Eckland, 1977). They are the group most likely to be in low academic tracks or special education classes (Knowles and Prewitt, 1969; Mercer, 1975). Furthermore, they have the highest ratios of negative interactions with teachers and classmates, receive proportionally more referrals for counseling, and are disciplined, suspended, and expelled from school more often than other race-gender children (Children's Defense Fund, 1976; Ogbu, 1978; Patchen 1982; Schofield, 1982).

Virtually the only way black males are advantaged, compared to other students, is that their levels of personal and academic self-esteem are higher. Despite their objectively poorer performances in schools, black males have the highest mean levels of self-esteem of any race-gender group (Hare, 1980; Simmons et al., 1979).

Research on black males and schooling has focused more on outcomes than on everyday interactions which produce differences in children's experiences. As Apple (1978) has written, educational researchers have treated schools as "black boxes," examining only input/output measures but failing to explore <u>how</u> school effects are produced. As many writers of the "resistance" school have noted, an erroneous assumption embedded in research on schools has been that students learn precisely what schools

teach (see, e.g., Anyon, 1983; Apple, 1978, 1979; Giroux, 1983; Kelly and Nihlen, 1982). Individually and collectively, students practice accommodation and resistance in schools. (Genovese, 1972). They absorb selective portions of schools' teaching, modify other portions, and resist some portions altogether. As Giroux (1983) has argued, resistance can protect students from cooptation by schools and be a force for creative change, but in certain forms can block students from obtaining resources available through schooling and can provide justifications for further oppression.

Another questionable assumption in research on schooling has been that schools have similar effects on students of all status configurations. As formally constituted socialization agencies in America, public schools have the capacity to respond differentially to persons they educate based on those persons' location in the formal and informal structure of the classroom, as well as the status and power of persons of similar status configurations in the larger society (Wheeler, 1966). I have argued elsewhere (Grant, 1984; forthcoming) that despite individual variations in students' schooling experiences, there are common experiences among students of the same ascribed status configurations. Schools have the means to differentiate among those they train and produce particularistic outcomes, although social norms require that schools maintain the veneer of equal opportunity (Ravitz, 1979; Rowan, 1982). Although schools might be capable of diminishing status distinctions among students, they more frequently perpetuate current status arrangements (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Chesler and Cave, 1981; Persell,1977). Opportunities for mobility occur only when there are macro-social pressures for change (Ogbu, 1978).

This paper compares experiences of black males with other race-gender

students in desegregated first grades. I argue that black males enter school more estranged and less "system dependent" than other groups (Lee and Gropper, 1974). Black males' experiences in schools typically magnify rather than diminish their entering predispostion of estrangement. The magnification of alienation does not result from conscious intent of teachers and school authorities. Rather, it evolves from a more complex set of forces affecting classroom life, including embedded expectations about black males' likely academic and social behaviors, these students' preschool socialization, teacher-student interactions, black males' interactions with peers, and elements of school and community which filter into classsrooms. Amplification of alienation can only be understood through examination over time of everyday classroom life. To explore black males' experiences in classrooms I concentrate on three dimensions of school life: teachers' perceptions of black males compared to other students, teacher-black male interactions, and these students' experiences in peer networks. As will be apparent as analyses proceed, these domains are closely interconnected.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODS

Nonparticipant observations were carried out in six desegregated first grade classrooms in working-class communities near a large Midwestern city. The six classrooms enrolled 139 students, of whom 29 or 20 percent, were black males. Minority enrollments ranged from 20 to 97 percent (Table 1). All teachers were female. Three (Maxwell, Avery, Delby) were white, and three (Todd, Horton, Douglas) were black. (All teacher, school, and child names are fictitious.) Black teachers instructed classes with heavier black enrollments, although Horton had a 71 percent white enrollment. All schools served predominantly white school districts, although

Douglas's room was in a school with a 95 percent black enrollment.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Three rooms (Delby's, Horton's, and Todd's) were in Dawson School, which the principal and administrators described to me as "something of an experiment." The school had a black principal and a 40 percent black enrollment, double the minority proportion of the district overall. Dawson's principal and an interracial group of teachers had designed the school to promote effective school desegregation. Drawing from available social science and educational literature, they located the building in a previously undeveloped farming area, which had no prior identity as either a white or a black neighborhood. Staff was 50 percent white and 50 percent black. Attendance boundaries were set so that the school enrolled, in nearly equal proportions, middle-class blacks, middle-class whites, poorer blacks, and poorer whites. As a result, neither teachers nor students could make facile associations between race and social class or race and academic achievement. All children were bussed to the school, a strategy which minimized demarcation between "neighborhood" and "bussed in" students.

Dawson staff planned extracurricular programs to attract an interracial clientele and involve diverse groups of parents. Principal Edgar Wills gerrymandered committee assignments for these events, so that multiethnic groups cooperated on projects. The activist Dawson parents formed the nucleus of an interracial support group which Wills could mobilize when the school board threatened to alter aspects of Dawson's environment (for example, its attendance boundaries) which staff believed critical to their goals. As will be seen, the social climate at Dawson differed from other schools. One result was that some of Dawson's black male students had

options not available to black males in other schools.

Each classroom was observed for a total of 20 to 30 hours in either the 1979-80 or 1980-81 school year. Observations covered all regularly scheduled activities. Notes taken during observations were expanded into full ethnographic notes, usually within 24 hours. Toward the end of observations, five teachers completed interviews in which they commented on academic skills and social relationships of each child in the class. Detailed notes were taken during interviews.

Codes for recurrent and meaningful themes recorded in field notes or teacher interviews were developed inductively from the data and subjected to reliability coding by students uninvolved in the original project (See Grant, 1984, for a fuller description of these procedures.)

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK MALES

Perceptions of black males in comparison to other students were assessed through teacher interviews. Teachers were asked two open-ended questions about each student: "Tell me about [child's name] academic skills and performance" and "Tell me about [child's name] relationships with other students in the class." The open-ended questions allowed assessment of criteria teachers believed relevant in evaluating each race-gender group, as well as the direction of the evaluation. Three recurrent themes emerged in teachers' evaluations of black males in comparison to other students: poor academic skills; potential behavior problems; and perceptions of estrangement, mystery, and perhaps vague threat associated with black males.

Academic Skills: Half the black males (48 percent) were evaluated as below average, slow, or poorly motivated (Table 2). "Not ready for first

grade work" was a descriptor applied to 8 of these children. Less than 10 percent of white females, 24 percent of white males, and 35 percent of black girls were evaluated as below average. Teachers identified 25 percent of black boys as average, and an additional 12 percent as "average or slightly below." Less than 10 percent were described as above average. Dawson teachers described nearly twice the proportion of black males as above average as teachers at other schools. Of 11 students named as possible candidates for retention, 7 were black males.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Douglas's description of the low-achieving Will typified teachers' comments about black males:

> He's just slow, not really ready for first grade work. Not settled down yet. It takes a lot of time, a lot of patience. He gets frustrated when he can't do [the assigned work]. Then I have to worry about him stirring up something.

Despite teachers' generally negative evaluations of black males, each Dawson first grade class had one black male superstar, whose skills teachers described in glowing terms usually reserved for white students. Each teacher believed she had contributed significantly to development of the superstar's skills and claimed partial credit for his outstanding performance.

Andrew, the only black male in Todd's top reading group, was her superstar. In Horton's room it was Mitchell, whom Horton admired for his rapid ascension from her second to her highest reading group. In Delby's room it was Wade, whom she described as "an able student" and "a natural leader with many friends." The teachers' descriptions of these token, high-achieving black boys differed in one respect from their descriptions

of the high-achieving students of other race-gender groups. Encapsulated in descriptions of superstars was the hint of some potential problem which had been averted by the teachers' perception or skill.

Although Horton admired Mitchell's progress, she noted that he "acts out quite a bit," and "really wants to make sure he gets his share of attention." She felt she needed to admire his work frequently and curb his tendencies toward aggression if his excellent performance was to persist. Todd noted that although Andrew was academically strong and quite artistic, he had "a real chip on his shoulder." Since Andrew sometimes neglected his homework, Todd felt it extremely important to keep in close contact with his parents so that he "stayed motivated to work." Delby noted with pride that Wade's older sister and brother also had been her students and his parents had requested her as Wade's teacher. (Dawson's other two first grade teachers were black and had higher ratios of black students than Delby, mostly because of parental requests). Delby noted that like his older brother, Wade, "wanted....to be the center of attention, and spend more time chattering than working." She believed he needed the careful monitoring she provided to stay on task.

The teachers' perceived need to give black males greater attention had several implications. First, it was consistent with themes articulated by other Dawson teachers, the principal, and district-level administrators that promoting high academic achievement was more difficult with black males than with other students. Second, it suggested that teachers were unwilling to grant black male superstars the trust and autonomy they gave similarly high-achieving white students, especially females. Third, the attributional patterns permitted Dawson teachers to claim partial credit

for the superstars' outstanding performances. In the culture of Dawson School, where the principal, teachers, and many parents were committed to improving performances of black students, a high-performing black male student brought teachers particular esteem. Horton's comments about Mitchell, for instance, suggested a claim for partial credit for his performance:

> He's just the type of student [who is] the most satisfying for me to teach. I can really see the payoff of my efforts. He just went through [an intermediate-level first grade reading text] very quickly, with no trouble at all. I'm very proud of what he has accomplished.

Dawson principal Wills mentioned to me often that he delighted in finding evidence of good performances which could be used to demonstrate to community residents and higher-ranking school administrators that black children could perform well. Although he did not state explicitly that he was especially interested in performances of black males, all 12 students whom he mentioned in conversations of this sort were black males. Black male superstars appeared only in Dawson schools, and there was only one in each room. Black females never occupied this role.

Behavior Problems: In response to questions about academic skills and and about social relationships, teachers noted that 17 of the 29 black male students exhibited some sort of behavioral problem: acting out, undesirable aggressiveness, talkativeness, excessive shyness. Teachers mentioned behavioral problems in connection with no larger than 33 percent of any other race-gender group. Maxwell, for example, described black male Christopher as "weepy...alone most of the time, really anti-social, I'd have to say." Douglas identified Nick (black male) as "Jumpy all the time. Just can't sit still and concentrate [on work]."

She noted that Jonas (black male) was "Always on the lookout for something he can do to get just everybody all riled up." Descriptions of behavior problems of black males often were coupled with evaluations of low academic skills or performance.

Uncertainty and Mystery: A related theme in teachers' perceptions of black males was that of uncertainty. Some of teachers' apparent uneasiness might have stemmed from discussing with a white researcher what often were negative evaluations of black students. Nevertheless, teachers added more qualifications in assessments of black males compared to other students. Paley (1979) reported a similar theme in kindergarten teachers' perceptions of black males.

Delby's comments about one student exemplified what interviews revealed to be typical teacher views of black males. She spoke of Andre, a low-achieving six-year-old:

> Sometimes he seems to be sitting behind a mask. Something in his eyes tells me he is deep into things he never brings [into the classroom], things I'll never find out about, no matter how hard I work at it.

She commented that although she liked Andre, her relationship with him made her uncomfortable. She wanted to know "where children are coming from." In fact, a feeling that she understood each child's motivations was central to her concept of a successful teacher-student relationship. She despaired of ever reaching this understanding of Andre, whom she characterized as "elusive, just beyond my fingertips." She pointed to Andre's characteristic behaviors (e.g., ignoring her repeated requests that he call her by name instead of "hey teacher") that confirmed her impression.

Todd described Roger's (black male) performance as "a mystery to me." Although Roger had been a high-achieving kindergarterner who had visited Todd's room for reading instruction, she noted he had "regressed" this year. Todd commented:

> I don't know what the problem is....trouble at home, maybe, or a little rebellion. I don't know....I hope he'll pick up again and start [working] the way he did last year.

Horton identified Garland (black male) as "the black sheep of the class." Although she thought his ability was high, he achieved only at moderate levels. Horton said he had trouble "settling down" in the class and talked in a loud, "eerie" voice. He sometimes had difficult getting along with classmates and was "unpredictable" in the quality of his work. Maxwell said that she "wished she know what made Tobin (black male) tick." Although she rated him below average in academic skills, she added that he "Sometimes picks things up right away. It's really amazing."

Teachers' feelings of lack of control and understanding were stronger for black males than for other race-gender children. Teachers mentioned themes of mystery or uncertainty in evaluations of only three other students (two white males and one white female), but such themes appeared in 11 of 29 descriptions of black males. (Avery did not complete interviews, but made spontaneous comments containing these themes about the two black males in her class.)

It is uncertain precisely why teachers saw black males as more mysterious than other children. Such themes were endorsed by "teachers' lounge lore" and other informal interchanges contributing to teachers' professional socialization (see Becker, 1958; Bidwell, 1965). They also were consistent

with stereotypes about adult blacks as being mysterious, unpredictable, and threatening in vague ways (see, e.g., Ballard, 1973; Bird, 1968).

The attribution of mystery to black males potentially had consequences for teachers' behaviors toward these students. Cooper (1979), for example, found that teachers gave fewer response opportunities and less "floor time" to students whose behaviors they believed they could not predict. Grant and Rothenberg (1981) found that teachers formed closer personal relationships, relationships with students whom they believed they could trust. Metz (1978) discovered that teachers systematically altered instructional styles in line with perceptions of skills, needs, and personal qualities of students they taught. Teachers felt less confident about skills of low-track students (a disproportionately large share of whom were black) and stressed rote drills and obedience to rules with this group more than with higher tracks. Finally, as Ballard (1973) noted, throughout history there has been a fear of empowering with knowledge a mistrusted group. Knowledge is a form of power which can lead to consciousness-raising and revolt. Furthermore, ignorance provides a rationale for imposing restraints on those whom authorities mistrust. Obgu (1978) argues that black males more so than black females are viewed as threatening by whites.

Teachers' perceptions of black males and behaviors toward them were influenced by the environment in which they worked. Nonconforming behaviors on the part of black males (e.g., styles of dress, grooming, or speech) were viewed as threatening within the contexts of white-controlled schools. To be regarded as successful instructors, teachers had to control displays of nonconformity. Unpredictable students threatened teachers' abilities to control.

TEACHERS' BEHAVIORS TOWARD BLACK MALES

As was true for all race-gender students, teachers' behaviors toward black males were only partially consistent with their privately-held views of these students. Teacher behaviors are examined through analysis of field notes. Some measures of behaviors have been quantified, although these frequency counts constitute what Becker (1958) terms "quasi-statistics" rather than sample data and cannot be subjected to tests of statistical significance. As I have argued elsewhere (Grant, 1984), I do not believe in most instances it is appropriate to aggregate frequency counts across classrooms, since each constituted a distinctive social world with its own meaning system. A teacher reprimand to a student in a room where reprimands are common does not have the same impact as a reprimand in a room where they are rare. Therefore, classrooms generally are compared only at the ordinal level. Frequency counts have been normed to 20 hours, to account for observation times ranging from 20 to 30 hours in the six rooms.

Ability Track Asignments: All six classrooms used ability groups for reading instruction. As Table 3 shows, 50 percent of black males were in groups identified by teachers as performing below grade level. This is larger proportion than any other race-gender students in low groups.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The totals, however, mask important school-by-school variation. At Dawson and Crescent schools, which had the higher minority enrollments, black males' placements were substantially higher than the overall average. None of the five black males in Todd's class was in her lowest reading group. Of two who read in her second-lowest group, one was a second grader who visited the class each day during reading for remedial instruction.

Horton and Delby, also at Dawson, participated in an exchange of students for reading. None of the seven black males in their two classes was in the lowest reading group. Of the three black male superstars at Dawson, Andrew and Mitchell were in top groups. Wade was in the second-highest group. At the mostly-black Crescent School, Douglas placed 25 percent of her black males in her lowest group, 33 percent in her middle group, and 42 percent in the highest. Thus, the downward placement of black males at Bass School, where 87.5 percent of black males were in below grade level groups in a three-teacher exchange in first grade, sharply skewed overall patterns.

School context seemingly had a strong influence on black males' ability track placements. Although teachers in all schools rated black males' academic abilities as lower than other students', black males were placed in lower tracks at Bass School in comparison to others. Bass had the highest ratio of white children, and no blacks on its regular teaching or administrative staff.

Eder (1981, 1983), Eder and Felmlee (1984), Grant and Rothenberg (1981), and Rist (1973), among others, have argued that placement in a top reading group leads to cumulative academic and social advantages over time. Mobility into and out of top groups is rare, especially as schooling progresses. Rist (1973) describes reading groups as having a "caste-like" character which hardens as schooling progresses. Eder (1983) argues that over time reading group membership magnifies rather than diminishes achievement differentials. Black males' initially low placement, especially in Bass School, thus might limit their long-range academic potentials. Mitchell, the superstar in Horton's room, was the only black male to move up in

reading group assignment during the four to five month observation period.

Teacher Feedback for Work: Frequency counts not reported here revealed in most rooms black males received average amounts of teacher feedback for academic work. Academic feedback included praise and criticism for work quality or habits, knowledge or intellectual skill. Examples were "That's a good math paper," or "You need to be more careful of the spacing when you write." The frequency counts, however, did not reveal that much of the praise received by black males came in contexts suggesting monitoring, rather than admiration of performance. An interchange between Dave (black male) and Todd illustrates this type of control-directed praise, which was given two to four times more often (depending on classroom) to black males than to other students:

> Now keep working on those [math problems]....You know how to do them. Use your counting blocks, if you need to. Good, you did that one right....Now don't talk to Ursula [another student] and bother her....You have to keep those numbers in a straight line....Yes, good, you managed to correct that one.

In addition to interspersing praise to black males with directions and criticism, teachers also gave black males higher proportions of qualified, or delimited praise. Qualified praise suggested that performances fell short of the highest standards or classmates' work. Maxwell's comment to Felix (black male) was one example:

> Well, how nice. That's a really good paper. You just need to watch the spacing a bit more. Do you think you can keep up the good work? This is much better than yesterday's. Maybe on Monday you'll turn in [a

paper] that is good enough to put up [on a bulletin board where Maxwell] displayed outstanding student work].

Examined in context, these messages were consistent with teachers' mostly negative perceptions of black males' academic skills. Such language might have conveyed to black males, and to eavesdropping classmates, messages that these students' work needed careful supervision and usually fell short of first-rate standards. The patterns also were consistent with the teachers' perceptions that high academic performance was more difficult to achieve among black males.

Feedback for Behavior: Feedback for behavior was evaluative comments not related to academics. Examples were: "I like the way you are sitting there quiet and ready to work" or "The people at Table three are being too noisy." Overall most teachers praised black males less and criticized them more in comparison to other students. Table 4 reports teacher praise to each race-gender group in the six classrooms. The two far right-hand columns of Table 4 report means for all students, regardless of race-gender status, and standard deviations. Means for particular race-gender groups which differ .5 or greater standard deviations from means for all students in the class are marked in the table. Black males received no behavioral praise in Avery's or Douglas' rooms. Both these teachers had low praise rates for all students. In Todd's room praise rates for black males fell well below those of most students. Black males averaged less than one-fourth the praise of all students in that room. In Horton's and Delby's rooms black males' praise rates were only slightly below classroom averages.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Table 5 shows teacher reprimands for behavior to each race-gender

group and to all students. Black males were substantially above class means in Maxwell's, Delby's, and Todd's rooms. In Delby's, they averaged nearly three and one-half times the reprimands of all students. Patterns for black male superstars deviated dramatically from those of most black males. These children received from one and one half to five times the praise for academic work and for behavior (depending on classroom) as the average black male. They were critized less than half as much for work or behavior as other black boys.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Several incidents suggested that teachers were particularly anxious about minor misbehaviors of black males than other students' and moved quickly to reprimand them. One afternoon Delby's students colored pictures of pilgrims in a lively session with many peer interchanges. When the day ended, Delby asked me if I had noticed Wade's behavior. She added that he had been "acting out a lot today," and that "his brother started to do the same thing about this time of year, too. I hope this won't be a problem." Notes showed that Wade had had an unusually high interaction rate with peers the previous half hour, but so had five other students of different race-gender attributes. Furthermore, 70 percent of 21 peer interchanges involving Wade in that period had been initiated by other students. Todd became tense at frequent minor physical skirmishes between black males Andrew and Ben, although other males in her room engaged in similar activities which seemed to bother her less. Todd recommended that the pair be assigned to different second grade rooms.

Teachers' quick responses to minor misbehaviors of black males were consistent with attributions of mystery and vague threat made about these

students. Some teachers implied that black males were ringleaders and/or potential adversaries capable of influencing behaviors of many children. These students' tight peer cadres, and the countercultural orientations of some peer groups (explored in later sections), likely fed teachers' anxieties. Delby, for instance, viewed Wade a "a model" for other students. Indeed, Wade appeared to be a charismatic child who was influential with peers. Delby said she believed it particularly important to control his actions, lest other children imitate his misbehaviors. Horton made similar comments about Mitchell. Like the other superstar black males, Mitchell usually dominated diverse race-gender students in interactions (see Cohen, 1980). Horton recognized his power with peers and intervened rapidly when he misbehaved, lest he "stir something up."

Black males seemed aware of their power to create tension and used it effectively in some instances. A standoff between Tobin and Maxwell is an illustration. Tobin left his desk during a work session, circled the room, and tapped his pencil on other students' desks. He eyed Maxwell, who watched him closely, her hands on her hips and her lips tight. After ignoring her reprimands for several minutes, Tobin finally complied with her request to sit down and resume work. Maxwell seemed relieved. Five similar interchanges were observed between black males and teachers in other rooms. The only other race-gender student involved in such a nonverbal show of resistance was a black female in Avery's room.

Metz (1978) described such encounters as competition with teachers for expressive control over the class. It is akin to covert aggression, a technique used by oppressed minorities as a means of resistance (Kovel, 1970). In these schools it was being used effectively by students whom

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teachers described as immature, slow, or not ready for first grade work. Teachers responded to resistance with anxiety (see Jordan, 1968), apparently fearing that black males threatened their control of the entire class and threatened to show them up as poor instructors who could not get students to comply with school norms. Because black males were more estranged from classrooms and less apt to conform with teacher rules at the outset, teachers moved swiftly to control their misbehaviors. But the hasty imposition of social controls likely intensified black males' estrangement from teachers and schools.

The Adult Supporter: In each school the very black males whom classroom teachers identified as their nemesis and reprimanded most heavily had supportive adults elsewhere in the school. The relationship between the rebellious black male students and the adult supporters was an illustration of accommodation and resistance to schools which, I will argue, had the tacit support of black teachers and administrators. The adult supporter was a gym or other special teacher, a principal, a parent volunteer, or in one case the school janitor.

Dave (black male), who drew four times the average reprimands in Todd's class, was a favorite of Melvin Gibbs, the black male gym teacher at Dawson School. Gibbs had a special nickname for Dave and often chose him to demonstrate activities, in part because Dave was a skilled athlete. Gibbs and Dave sometimes shot basketballs together or moved to a corner of the gym to chat. Their happy expressions and animated gestures suggested these chats were mutually enjoyable.

In subtle ways, the adult supporter encouraged maintenance of black cultural forms which classroom teachers discouraged at the overt level:

black dialect, rough-and-tumble play, social skills, derring do, and sexuality -- arenas where black males typically have been allowed to excel within white-controlled school systems (see Braddock, 1980; Hare and Castenell, 1981; Schofield, 1982). The adult supporter might also have functioned as a safety valve for "deviant" or nonconforming students who would not fully accept the orderly, middle-class norms which school authorities preferred. In complex ways, they might also have served as safety valves for black classroom teachers who were forced in their schools to conform to white cultural norms (see Valentine, 1971). If a child became seriously dissatisfied with school, he might misbehave extensively or complain to parents. Teachers and administrators hoped to avoid either outcome.

Black classroom teachers sometimes enjoyed black males' out-of-class activities when these students were supervised by the supportive adult. Douglas, for example, stood at the door of the gym to watch Jonas (black male), whom she described as "making me old before my time." She reprimanded Jonas eight times as often as the average student in her class. But Douglas laughed heartily as Jonas, under the supervision of the black male gym teacher, "returned" basketballs to a storage cabinet in a manner designed to hit as many classmates as possible. Another day she called me over to watch Jonas climb a thick rope to the top of the gym, telling me, "Look at that little scamp, that little monkey, go."

The compensatory attentions offered by supportive adults were counters to the colorblind stances of most schools and seemed what Ravitz (1979) described as "color conscious" strategies: giving something extra to students whom supporters perceived as having special needs. Some adult supporters said students whom they aided reminded them of themselves at

a similar age: bouncy, energetic, not outstanding scholars, and "having a hard time in class." The special relationships provided satisfaction to the adult supporters and perhaps to some black classroom teachers, despite their overt allegiance to white behavioral norms. Covertly, black teachers appeared to enjoy the expressions of vigor and mock-hostility more often permitted in black than in white schools (Ballard, 1973; Kvaraceus, 1965; Suransky, 1982; Valentine, 1971). Black teachers might also have been more aware than whites that adult supporters were helpful for black males' development of two seemingly paradoxical skills to satisfy their parents' desire that they both do well in schools but maintain their loyalty to black culture (Genovese, 1972; Lightfoot, 1978).

The adult supporter countered black males' estrangement from schools, but bound them to a narrow sector of the school environment and channeled them toward a narrow range of activities which did not enhance educational achievement or social mobility opportunities for most (Braddock, 1980; Hare and Castenell, 1981).

Teacher Chats: Teachers sometimes engaged children in chats about personal life. Frequency counts show no definitive patterns across rooms in black males' propensities to engage in chats. Frequency counts do not reveal, however, that teachers engaged in chats successfully only with superstar black males. Black males were less apt than any other students to initiate chats with teachers. They also showed more resistance to teachers' bids to chat with them, by using such strategies as moving away or giving monosyllable replies. Depending on classroom, black boys resisted chats nearly two to four times as often as other students. Delby, for example, tried several times in three days to chat with Andre when she believed a home

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problem was inteferring with his work. She termed Andre's resistance to involvement in chats as "hostility." She then questioned black girls who lived near Andre about his home life.

In other instances, teachers expressed reluctance to press black boys for personal-life information. When Tobin seemed unusually angry one morning, teacher Maxwell confided: "I'm not sure I want to ask. I'm not sure I want to know that much about [aspects of his home life]." Estrangement thus seemed difficult to overcome. The trust necessary to establish personal-level relationships seemed lacking on both sides.

BLACK MALES' ORIENTATIONS TOWARD TEACHERS

I have reported elsewhere (Grant forthcoming) that although average ratios of contacts with peers versus contacts with teachers varied markedly by classroom, black males in all six rooms nevertheless had relatively fewer contacts with teachers and relatively more contacts with peers compared to other race-gender groups. Although this pattern was evident from the earliest days of observations, it intensified over time. Only the superstars initiated chats or attempted to influence teachers.

Many writers have commented on this estranged relationship between black males and teachers. Most typically, accounts stress teachers' and school systems' insensitivities to needs, intellectual styles, and interests of black males, albeit unintended. Paley (1979) gives an account of this sort in describing a first encounter between a black male kindergartener and his white middle-class female teacher:

> Suddenly a stranger called "teacher" is trying to find out not who he is, but what he knows. The further away the teacher is from the child's cultural and tempermental background, the more likely it

> is that the wrong question will be asked. The child instinctively knows the questions are inappropriate, but soon figures out that he must be the one who is inappropriate. Thus begins the energy-consuming task of trying to cover up his differences.

My analyses suggest that while there is some merit to Paley's view, it probably implies an overly passive role for black males. Black males' resistance to classroom life is evident from the beginning of the term, perhaps reflecting themes of accommodation and resistance in parental socialization. Challenges and masks of inattention were two examples of strategies used early in the term by black boys to distance themselves from teachers.

Challenges were infrequent in most rooms, and frequency counts indicate that black boys were no more likely than white boys (but considerably more likely than girls of both races) to engage in them. White males usually challenged teachers about factual issues (e.g., "The answer to that problem is not right.") Nearly 70 percent of challenges raised by white males were of this sort (Grant, 1983). In contrast, an equal proportion of challenges raised by black males concerned teachers' imposition of authority. Challenges could be individual or collective; the latter were particularly annoying for teachers.

Tobin challenged Maxwell's directive to the class to put their heads down on desks by calling out: "I'm not tired now." Dave questioned Todd's reprimand for talking to a white male classmate, pointing out that Alice (black female) also had talked but had escaped punishment. When a group of four black male students pleaded with Maxwell to extend their recess and ignored her repeated requests that they sit down, she threatened to call the principal: a tactic observed twelve times in connection with

black male students but only three times in connection with any other group. Eddy (1967, p. 88) has suggested that teachers sometimes misperceive black males as challenging when students do not intend to be defiant. She believed teachers mistook black boys' culturally-divergent behaviors as rudeness. Although this probably occurs in some situations, Eddy's analysis does not account for some challenges recorded in field notes which were carefully calculated ploys, sometimes involving several students, to rile the teacher. Interestingly, black males rarely used negotiation, a type of influence used with teachers by white students of both genders. In negotiations students attempted, usually privately and individually, to persuade teachers to take or avoid actions on behalf of self or others. From the perspective of resistant students, challenges offered two advantages which negotiations did not. First, challenges freed students from the need to confide in teachers and build a trusting relationship, a prerequisite to successful negotiation. Second, challenges but not negotiations provided opportunities for confrontation and competition for expressive control (see Metz, 1978).

Masks of Inattention: Another intriguing behavior, observed for black males but not other students, is what I term the mask of inattention. Black males sometimes feigned inattention to lessons when they covertly were attending. This is the reverse of a skill rapidly acquired by high-achieving and conforming students: the ability to appear attentive while actually inattentive (see Rist, 1978). Typically, the mask of inattention was revealed when a teacher called on a student, believing him to be inattentive but discovering with surprise that he had been paying attention.

Ralph (black male), in Delby's room, seemed inattentive when Delby

read a story to the class as they assembled on a rug in a corner of the room. During the session Ralph rolled on his stomach, stared out the door in the opposite direction, rearranged puzzle pieces on a shelf behind him, engaged in a pencil-poking match with a classmate, and flipped through his math workbook. When Delby asked him a specific query about the story's content, he responded accurately and in detail. Delby commented, "Well, I guess you were with us all along, weren't you?" Horton, frustrated with Mitchell's talkativeness one morning, told me as she called him to bring over his morning's written work: "I'll bet he didn't even hear what [the assignment] was." She said, "Well, I'm really surprised" as Mitchell handed her neat, complete, and well-done papers.

Notes recorded 15 instances involving all classrooms where teachers seemingly underestimated the attention level of black males. Such misunderstandings were recorded in connection with only two other race-gender students. Black females also showed awareness of black males' masks of inattention. When Mitchell (black male) told Garland (black male) in Horton's room that "I didn't worry none" about his homework assignment the night before, Millie (black female) told Mitchell: "You are lying. I saw [your completed assignment] on the bus."

Walter Allen (personal communication) has suggested that masks are both assertive and protective devices. He believes they may be part of the adaptive strategies black parents teach sons for coping with often-hostile school environments without suffering severe damage to self-esteem. Black daughters also receive instruction in usage of masks, but since they encounter less hostility than black males in elementary schools, use them less frequently. Masks allow black males to accommodate parents' goals that they succeed

in white educational systems but also maintain their distinctive black cultural identity. The half tuned-in, half tuned-out orientations which masks facilitate allow black males to pay attention to the teacher without signaling that they are "with her," but withdraw rapidly without apparent exposure when the situation becomes threatening.

As Giroux (1983) has noted, however, such forms of resistance might be costly and might limit black males' prospects for social mobility. Teachers interpret inattentiveness as immaturity and lack of "readiness" for academic work. Such behaviors become justifications for decisions limiting academic opportunities for students, such as assignment to lower ability tracks. Successful use of masks likely intensifies black males' estrangement from classrooms and intensifies teachers' expectations that such students will be elusive and difficult to control (Wegman, 1976).

BLACK MALES' PEER INTERACTIONS

Black males' peer interchanges were intertwined in complex ways with their relationships with teachers. In comparison to other students peer interchanges were more central and teacher contacts less central to schooling experience. Black males' peer interchanges also were structurally and qualitatively different from those of other race-gender groups.

Peer Group Structures: With the exception of peer cliques formed by high-achieving white female students, black males' peer networks were the most insular. In these classrooms black males were less likely than other race-gender students to interact with peers of other race-gender configurations, especially for more intimate, extended contacts (Grant, 1981). This contrasts with patterns reported for junior high schools, where black males more often than black females interacted with other

race-gender students (Schofield, 1982). However, age, grade level, class assignment, and ability grouping were not barriers to black males' peer networks to the extent that they were for those of other children (Grant, 1981). These observations are consistent with an interpretation that the official structure of the school had less impact on black males than on other students (see Clement et al., 1979; Hansell and Karweit, 1983).

Superstars were partial exceptions to these patterns. Superstars had wider contacts with diverse race-gender peers, but also retained ties with black male peer groups, some of which maintained counter-school orientations. Cohen (1980) found a similar pattern in desegregated schools where blacks were relatively powerful in the community. This contrasted sharply with patterns observed for high-achieving black females, who tended to move away from black peer groups to join whites as they moved up the achievement hierarchy.

Teachers disliked superstars' continuing allegiance to networks of lower-achieving black male peers. Observations revealed that superstars frequently were pressured by lower-achieving black males to ignore work. Garland (black male), for instance, tried to persuade Mitchell (black male) to ignore Horton's instructions for an assignment, telling him, "Come on, man, that's the same old stuff she always tells us." Similar interchanges sometimes took place among white males or cross-racial groups of males, but notes revealed they were at least twice as common in every classroom among black males than other groups.

Qualitative Components of Peer Interchanges: For most black males, gaining status with one's peers was more probable than gaining status with teachers, given teachers' low estimations of black males' abilities as scholars.

As Hare and Castenell (1981) have argued, however, the bases of status attainment encouraged in black male peer groups -- derring do, athletics, social skills, sexuality, and physical domination -- not only fan school authorities' fears about social controls but also lead black boys away from academic achieveement. Hare and Castenell characterize modes of achievement such as athletics as "short-term success arenas but long-term outwash plains." Black males who pour central energies into these activities, and into passive forms of resistance, cooperate in their own cooptation (see also Giroux, 1983). Only a few find lasting success, and the majority end up ill-prepared for high status occupational and social roles.

Males, and especially black males, were overrepresented in incidents of verbal and physical aggression in most rooms (Grant, 1983). Teacher interviews suggested a race-of-teacher difference in interpretations of physical aggression among black males. The three white teachers were concerned about "violent" or "overly-aggressive" tendencies in black and in white boys whom they reprimanded heavily. White teachers mentioned these themes in connection with greater than 80 percent of male students in their room whose reprimand rates were double or more the rate for all students in the class. Black teachers more commonly defined such incidents as rambunctious behaviors to be expected on occasion from first graders. Teachers of both races, however, clearly defined such behaviors as inappropriate in the classroom and moved swiftly to control them. Black males were overrepresented in all classrooms as instigators and as victims in incidents of physical and of verbal aggression, a finding consistent with most research (Brophy forthcoming).

Black males also were relatively more helpful and nurturant to peers

than were white males, however. Table 6 shows rates and ratios of giving and receiving help on academic work for each race-gender group. The ratio appearing on the top line of each cell in Table 6 is calculated as the mean instances of receipt of help divided by the mean instances of giving help for students of each race-gender group. A ratio of less than one means students in this group gave more help than they received; a ratio of greater than one indicates the reverse. In all rooms black males gave more help than did white males, although females in most rooms gave more help than did black males.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Table 7 shows comparable data for care, or aid of a nonacademic nature, such as help with tying a shoe or finding a lost item. Ratios are calculated in the same manner as for Table 6. Once again, black males gave more care than did white males, although female students usually gave greater ratios of care in most classes.

Notably, black males interacted positively and negatively with the same students. Notes revealed most fought and argued with the same students whom they helped and nurtured. This contrasted markedly with patterns for females, especially white females, who had clear sets of friends and enemies with few overlaps among the groups (see also Karweit and Hansell, 1983). The patterns suggested a different structure and meaning of peer ties by gender, and perhaps also by race. Aggression and conflict apparently did not deter friendships among males the way they did among girls. Schofield (1982) has suggested that such rough-and-tumble behaviors among males often are displays of solidarity, although they usually interpreted as conflict and justifications for imposition of social controls by teach-

ers. She notes that these rough-and-tumble behaviors may be variably interpreted by students of different race-gender configurations and probably also by teachers.

Douglas, who taught the mostly black class at Crescent School, was the only teacher to note and to value the tight, but sometimes conflict-ridden relationships among her black male students. Commenting that they often were "like a family," she said: "Some of them are really a handful, but they really care about one another. They'll fight for themselves, but they'll fight even harder for one another."

The closeness of the peer groups was noticed, and sometimes feared, by teachers. Many confided they believed that when they disciplined a member, they were taking on, as Todd put it, "an army of detractors." This perception placed an extra charge on teacher-black male encounters around issues of control and perhaps led to students' greater estrangement.

The peer groups' internal dynamics shielded members from unpleasant aspects of classroom life. They also allowed practice of outlawed black cultural styles, planning of campaigns for expressive control of classrooms, and resistance to cultural domination. For some students, though, the cloak of heavy peer involvement became so constricting that they never made the minimal connections with school life needed for academic success. The estranged relationship which intensified between teachers and most black males likely strengthened these students' tendencies to retreat into tight peer cadres. The retreat, in turn, magnified teachers' perceptions that these students were alienated and unreachable.

Superstars successfully transcended tight peer entanglements, although they maintained ties to peer groups. I contend that superstars were more

the products of the Dawson School environment than of attributes of students who occupied the role. There was only one superstar in any class, and they appeared only in the school where teachers were under pressure to demonstrate competence in teaching black students. One suspects that the actual pressure might have been to produce just one: enough to gratify those concerned with black achievement that these students were being treated equitably, but not so many that white community residents and school administrators felt threatened by a radical reorganization of status arrangements. Superstars were tokens in the truest sense, providing protection for teachers and administrators against charges of racism or ineffectiveness in educating blacks, but also deflecting attention away from the school's poorer record with most black males (see Laws, 1975).

CONCLUSION

This study covered only six classrooms in a restricted geographical area and conclusions must be tentative. Nevertheless, black males' movement in schools toward greater estrangement is an example of what Abrams (1982) terms "the sociology of becoming." Abrams describes the process as "sequences of characteristic, but not predetermined interactions, probable but not prescribed episodes of action and response in which the individual moves or is moved from one status to another" (p. 271). Black males' assumption of classroom roles is a series of contingent, nonrandom action on the part of self and others.

Commonalities in black males' experiences in these rooms suggest that school life is neither as simplistic nor as monolithic as many accounts imply. Black males seemingly enter the classroom more estranged from

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teachers and more tightly integrated into peer networks than most other race-gender students. For them peer involvements strengthen resistance to school influence.

However, important parts of the process originate in the system, rather than in students or teachers. Classroom organizational patterns, curriculum, grouping patterns, normative expectations about capabilities and likely behaviors of each race-gender group, and community sentiments about appropriate roles of each race-gender group all constrict the sequence of contingencies available to black males (see Boocock, 1980; Feagin and Eckberg, 1980). Abrams writes (p. 291) that institutions with organized social power, such as schools, not only create meaning but can require that subjects collaborate meaning. Over time social roles become more concrete and more binding for all actors.

For many black males classroom life seems a struggle against being swept into a predefined, but unpalatable identity. Schools "expect" black males to emerge with the poorest academic skills, least well qualified for positions of status and leadership in the larger society. Tight peer alliances and masks of inattention are impressive strategies of resistance on the part of first graders. But outcome measures on effects of schooling reveal that few resist the predefined roles over the long-run. Except where social pressures create wedges for limited mobility (the case of the superstars), black males generally learn the academic and behavioral skills to play traditional roles of black men in society (Ogbu, 1978).

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Table 1. Race-Gender Configurations of Children in Six Classrooms[b]

Teacher/ Classroom[a]	Teacher Race	Black Females	Black Males	White Males	White Females	Totals
Maxwell	White	3 (11%)	3 (11%)	10 (37%)	11 (41%)	27 (100%)
Avery	White	3 (13%)	2 (8%)	12 (50%)	7 (29%)	24 (100%)
Delby	White	2 (11%)	2 (11%)	5 (26%)	10 (52%)	19 (100%)
Todd	Black	9 (38%)	5 (21%)	4 (17%)	6 (25%)	24 (100%)
Horton	Black	2 (10%)	4 (19%)	9 (42%)	6 (29%)	21 (100%)
Douglas	Black	10 (42%)	13 (54%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	24 (100%)
TOTALS		29 (21%)	29 (21%)	41 (29%)	40 (29%)	139 (100%)

[a]All teacher names are fictitious.

[b]Table includes only those children present 80% or greater of the observation times.

Table 2. Five Teachers'[a] Ratings of "Academic Skills" of Their Students, By Students' Race-Gender Status

Rated Ability	Black Females	Black Males	White Males	White Females	Totals
High, Above Average	6 (23%)	4 (15%)	8 (28%)	15 (45%)	33 (29%)
Average	11 (42%)	10 (37%)	14 (48%)	16 (48%)	51 (44%)
Low, Below Average	9 (35%)	13 (48%)	7 (24%)	2 (7%)	31 (27%)
Totals	26 (100%)	27 (100%)	29 (100%)	33 (100%)	115 (100%)

[a]Includes ratings by Maxwell, Delby, Todd, Horton, and Douglas.

Table 3. Reading Ability Group Placements of Students by Students' Race-Gender Status[a]

Performance Level of Group	White Females	White Males	Black Females	Black Males	All
Above Grade Level	15 (38%)	11 (29%)	6 (21%)	4 (14%)	36 (26%)
At Grade Level[b]	19 (48%)	16 (39%)	14 (48%)	12 (41%)	61 (44%)
Below Grade Level	6 (14%)	14 (34%)	9 (31%)	13 (45%)	42 (30%)
Total	40(100%)	41(100%)	29(100%)	29(100%)	139(100%)

[a] Totals include children enrolled in a sixth classroom also observed. This class had a black teacher and enrollments of no white females, 1 white male, 10 black females, and 13 black males.

[b] Include four students (two white females, two black males) in individualized reading programs supervised by Horton, who said all four read at grade level.

Table 4. Mean Instances of Teacher Praise for Behavior to Each Race-Gender Group, Per Child Per 20 Observational Hours

Teacher/ Classroom[a]	Mean Per Black Female	Mean Per Black Male	Mean Per White Female	Mean Per White Male	All Students $\bar{X}$	All Students s.d.
Maxwell	3.52+	.44	1.26	2.11	1.73	2.97
Avery	.53+	0	.20	.22	.223	.43
Delby	.99	.50	.99	.20+	.73	.93
Todd	1.06	.20+	1.43+	.24+	.83	1.02
Horton	2.01+	.50	.33	1.34	.96	1.47
Douglas	.98	0	0[b]	0	.428	1.45[c]

+Mean for this group differs .5 or greater standard deviations from the mean for all students in the classroom.

[a]All teacher names are fictitious.

[b]Douglas' classroom contained no white females, and only one white male.

[c]Excludes totals for the one white male student.

Table 5. Mean Instances of Teacher Reprimands for Behavior to Each Race-Gender Group, Per Child Per 20 Observational Hours

Teacher/ Classroom[a]	Mean Per Black Female	Mean Per Black Male	Mean Per White Female	Mean Per White Male	All Students $\bar{X}$	s.d.
Maxwell	9.01	14.94+	8.27	12.07	10.50	8.77
Avery	11.13	7.55	8.74	9.54	9.31	3.96
Delby	3.47+	24.79+	9.92	14.88	12.47	6.98
Todd	6.14	11.43+	.952+	5.71	5.87	5.18
Horton	13.05	14.06	15.06	11.50	13.15	7.07
Douglas	4.23+	13.77	0[b]	33.44+	10.48	11.61[c]

+Mean for this group differs .5 or greater standard deviations from the mean for all students in the classroom.

[a]All teacher names are fictitious.

[b]Douglas' classroom contained no white females, and only one white male.

[c]Excludes totals for the one white male student.

Table 6. Rates of Receiving Help/Giving Help Among Classmates on Academic Work for Each Race-Gender Group Per 20 Hours in Six Classrooms.

	White Females	White Males	Black Females	Black Males
Maxwell[a]				
Ratio R/G[b]	.86	2.0	.51	*[d]
(N of R/G)[c]	(.29/.34)	(.52/.26)	(.36/.70)	(.18/0)
Avery				
Ratio R/G	.25	1.0	*[d]	1.67
(N of R/G)	(.20/.90)	(.28/.28)	(0/1.6)	(.99/.60)
Delby				
Ratio R/G	.83	2.5	.50	4.67
(N of R/G)	(1.5/1.8)	(1.0/.40)	(1.0/2.0)	(3.5/.75)
Todd				
Ratio R/G	.33	.13	4.96	.50
(N of R/G)	(.48/1.6)	(.24/1.9)	(2.6/.53)	(.48/.95)
Horton				
Ratio R/G	.60	1.3	.33	1.14
(N of R/G)	(1.05/1.75)	(1.02/.79)	(.53/1.6)	(2.1/1.84)
Douglas				
Ratio R/G	**[e]	*[d]	.88	(1.1)
(N of R/G)		(2.3/0)	(2.3/2.6)	(2.61/2.4)

[a]All teacher names are fictitious.

[b]Calculated as ratio of mean instances of receiving help by this subgroup divided by mean instances of giving help, normed to 20 hours.

[c]Mean instances of receiving and giving help per child of this race-gender group in this classroom, normed to 20 observation hours. Instances of receiving and giving help are not precisely equal because only students present 80% or more of the observation time were included in tabulating means. These students sometimes gave and received help from sutdents not present 80% or more of observation time.

[d]Ratio cannot be calculated because numerator or denominator equals zero.

[e]Douglas's class enrolled no white females.

Table 7. Rates of Receiving Care/Giving Care among Classmates for Each Race-Gender Group Per 20 Hours in Six Classrooms.

	White Females	White Males	Black Females	Black Males
Maxwell[a]				
Ratio R/G[b]	.23	3.0	.49	1.0
(N of R/G)[c]	(.15/.63)	(.63/.21)	(.17/.35)	(.64/.64)
Avery				
Ratio R/G	1.0	1.1	.29	*[d]
(N of R/G)	(.37/.37)	(.41/.37)	(.40/1.39)	(.90/0)
Delby				
Ratio R/G	.71	1.8	1.3	.50
(N of R/G)	(1.0/1.4)	(1.8/1.0)	(2.5/2.0)	(1.5/3.0)
Todd				
Ratio R/G	*[d]	*[d]	.47	.21
(N of R/G)	(01.31)	(.48/0)	(.64/1.4)	(.24/1.1)
Horton				
Ratio R/G	.31	1.0	.64	1.7
(N of R/G)	(.70/.23)	(1.3/1.3)	(2.1/3.7)	(3.1/1.8)
Douglas				
Ration R/G	**[e]	3.9	.70	1.3
(N of R/G)		(3.9/1)	(.69/.99)	(1.7/1.5)

[a]All teacher names are fictitious

[b]Calculated as ratio of mean instances of receiving care by this subgroup divided by mean instances of giving care, normed to 20 hours.

[c]Mean instances of receiving and giving care per child of this race-gender group in this classroom, normed to 20 observation hours. Instances of receiving and giving care are not precisely equal because only students present 80% or more of the observation time were inclused in tabulating means. These students sometimes gave and received care from students not present 80% or more of observation time.

[d]Ratio cannot be calculated becuase numerator or denominator equals zero.

[e]Douglas's class enrolled no white females.